

WASHINGTON POST
18 March 1985

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE E-8

UPDATE ON THE NEWS

Man Who Helped Lure Edwin Wilson To U.S. Is Fugitive

The 65-year-old McLean man who helped lure fugitive CIA agent Edwin P. Wilson back to the United States to face prosecution and who was shot and slightly wounded during a mysterious incident last December has himself become a fugitive.

Since the shooting Dec. 2, Ernest R. Keiser has missed a trial on an obstruction of justice charge in a federal court in Tampa, Fla., and a sentencing hearing in a state court in White Plains, N.Y., for a January conviction of grand larceny.

Keiser's attorney, William Aronwald, interviewed in White Plains by telephone, said he has

"reason to believe [Keiser is] on the run. I don't believe he's still in the country."

"I learned that he had left his home [in McLean] and his whereabouts were unknown," Aronwald said, "that his wife was gone, his mother-in-law was gone, the cars were gone, the furniture was gone, the clothes were gone and the dogs were gone."

The federal government and the state of New York have issued fugitive warrants for Keiser's arrest.

The FBI in Tampa said there are active leads in the pursuit of Keiser, but officials declined to elaborate.

In 1982, Keiser, who describes himself as a former CIA employee, was targeted for assassination after helping lure Wilson back to the United States, according to federal prosecutors. Wilson eventu-

ally was sentenced to 32 years in prison for conspiring to send weapons and explosives to Libya or Libyan agents.

The shooting incident, in which Keiser suffered a back wound, occurred last Dec. 2 in the parking lot of a McLean restaurant. Keiser said at the time that he was helping government lawyers track another celebrated fugitive, financier Robert Vesco—a claim police said they could not confirm—and Keiser may have been shot as a result.

Fairfax County police and prosecutors say the shooting remains a mystery; no bullet, gun or gunman was found. Keiser, who claimed that a man placed a gun to his spine and took his brief case, was superficially injured.

"I don't know as how there was any resolution of that shooting," said prosecutor Robert F. Horan Jr. "It's just not the kind of thing

where you can really come to any open-and-shut conclusions."

Attorney Aronwald said Keiser believed that the criminal charges against him were harassment from the government because he was helping some federal agencies and not others. "He felt he was being prosecuted pretty much as a result of an internal conflict between the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service," Aronwald said.

A Justice Department spokesman scoffed at the idea. "We've heard that before," said John Russell. "We don't go out and prosecute people on the whim of an investigative agency. They have the grist for that theory, they have all the ingredients, all the facts, but it's simply not true."

In fleeing, Keiser apparently risks losing his house at 8460 Holly Leaf Rd., McLean. The \$250,000 house was security for bond in the Tampa case, but a Jus-

tice Department source said that the department has not moved to seize the house following his failure to appear for trial.